

Central Intelligence Agency



Washington, D.C. 20505

17 OCT 1983

Honorable William P. Clark
Assistant to the President
for National Security Affairs
National Security Council
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Bill:

I am deeply troubled by the recent Congressional attention which has focused upon the use of the polygraph by the United States Government. Congressional interest in the "Carlucci Initiative," which expands the use of the polygraph within the Department of Defense, has become intertwined with Congressional concern about the use of the polygraph in unauthorized disclosure investigations as provided in NSDD-84. The result is that the Congress is now taking a close, skeptical look at the Government's use of the polygraph across the board and, unless we are careful, not only will additional use of this valuable security tool be rendered impossible, but the effectiveness of existing personnel security programs which utilize the polygraph may be jeopardized.

To help ensure that such an eventuality does not come to pass, it is my judgment that an Administration policy statement on the use of the polygraph by the Government should be developed. This will meet the concerns of many critics that the Government uses the polygraph on a haphazard, arbitrary, and capricious basis, pursuant to no reasoned policy or program. Such a polygraph policy should authorize use of the polygraph for three separate and distinct security purposes. In order of their importance to the national security, these purposes would be:

a. The use of the polygraph in the personnel security programs of CIA and NSA as an adjunct to security processing;

b. The use of the polygraph as a screening device for persons in the Executive Branch who are being processed for initial or continued access to Sensitive Compartmented Information (SCI); and

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c. The use of the polygraph in other appropriate contexts, such as in investigations of unauthorized disclosures of classified information.

With respect to the first category of polygraph use, the CIA and NSA polygraph programs have been in place for decades. They are essential components of the personnel security programs of both agencies and they are conducted by highly trained professionals. There has been no hint of abuse or any misuse of the polygraph by either CIA or NSA. Unlike the employees of other Government agencies, CIA and NSA employees come into contact with the most sensitive intelligence information on a daily basis. Only the most rigorous security standards can ensure the protection of such information. I'm sure you agree that CIA and NSA simply cannot afford to lose the added degree of protection provided by the carefully focused use of the polygraph in their personnel security programs.

The second category of polygraph use would represent a moderate, but significant expansion of polygraph use within the Government. I continue to believe that the security of intelligence sources and methods cannot be protected only at the producer end of the intelligence chain. The consumers of intelligence should be required to meet the most stringent security standards appropriate to their level of informational access. Those who are given access to the most sensitive intelligence information, SCI, ought to be subject to the most stringent security processing possible, which should include use of the polygraph as a screening device. Polygraph examinations conducted for this purpose would be limited to issues directly related to counterintelligence. This proposed use of the polygraph would serve two important security purposes. First, it would help identify any persons who have relationships with foreign intelligence services. Second, it would have a deterrent effect on persons granted SCI access and would ensure a greater sensitivity and care in the handling and safeguarding of such intelligence information.

The third category of polygraph use would provide authority to employ the polygraph in circumstances related to the protection of classified information, or in law enforcement matters, where such use would be desirable, as well as appropriate, but where case-by-case approval would be required. This category would include the use of the polygraph in investigating unauthorized disclosures of classified information. Although the establishment of this category of polygraph use would not represent a significant increase in polygraph use, numerically

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speaking, this category is the most far-reaching in concept and is almost certain to generate the most controversy. However, some concerns of those critical to this approach could be alleviated by the clear understanding that unauthorized disclosure polygraph examinations would not be given in a blunderbuss way, but only when other investigations have narrowed the suspects to a manageable few. In addition, I would suggest that the Attorney General promulgate guidelines governing use of polygraph in appropriate law enforcement contexts.

If the Administration's polygraph statement is constructed along the lines I have outlined above, we will have gone a long way towards establishing a narrow, carefully tailored polygraph program for the Government which meets the needs of the Government to protect the most sensitive classified information, but in a reasonable and restrained fashion. However, I cannot emphasize enough the necessity of preserving the polygraph component of the personnel security programs of CIA and NSA, whether any expansion of polygraph use occurs or not. While it would be desirable to increase the use of the polygraph in the ways set forth above, we should take great care to ensure that use of the polygraph by CIA and NSA is neither restricted nor impaired as we proceed with this undertaking.

One final point should be noted. DOD representatives are scheduled to testify before the Brooks Committee on 19 October regarding DOD's plans for expanding the use of the polygraph. I understand that the Secretary of Defense has not decided whether he will continue to advocate expanded use of the polygraph or agree to abandon the "Carlucci Initiative." Since the support of DOD is essential if the use of the polygraph is to be expanded, it would be advisable for you to review this matter with the Secretary of Defense.

I look forward to hearing from you further regarding my proposal.

/s/ Bill

William J. Casey
Director of Central Intelligence

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SUBJECT: Letter to the Honorable William P. Clark
 Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
 Re Polygraph--Its Future in the Federal Government

CONCUR:

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14 OCT 1983

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14 OCT 1983

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10/14/83

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